

*R3* --Summary of the Invention--

Insert at page 4, line 8:

*R4* --Detailed Description of the Invention--

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1 through 14 as follows:

- Sub 5*
1. (Amended) A process for primer coating of steel which is intended to be fabricated and overcoated, in which process the steel is primer coated with a primer coating comprising a silica or silicate binder, wherein the binder comprises an aqueous silica sol or alkali metal silicate having a  $\text{SiO}_2/\text{M}_2\text{O}$  mole ratio, where M represents total alkali metal and ammonium ions, of at least 6:1, and that after the primer coating has dried to the extent that it is touch dry it is treated with a film strengthening solution.
  2. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the touch dry primer coating is sprayed with the film strengthening solution.
  - Sub 7*  
3. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the binder is a silica sol of  $\text{SiO}_2/\text{M}_2\text{O}$  mole ratio at least 25:1.
  - Sub 8*  
4. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the binder comprises an aqueous solution of an alkali metal or ammonium silicate stabilized by a siliconate substituted by at least one anionic group of lower pKa than silicic acid, having a pH of 7 to 10.5 prepared by lowering the pH of a solution of silicate and siliconate by ion exchange.

5. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the primer coating further comprises zinc powder and/or a zinc alloy.
6. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the primer coating further comprises an organic resin.
7. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein all components of the coating composition are added and thoroughly mixed shortly before application.
8. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the touch dry primer coating is treated with a solution of a silicate or alkoxysilane.
9. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the solution is applied to the touch dry primer coated steel at 0.005-0.2 liters per square meter primer coated surface.
10. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the touch dry primer coating is treated with an aqueous solution of an inorganic salt of concentration at least 0.01M.
11. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the primer coating of the steel, drying of the primer coating until it is touch dry and application of the treatment solution are carried out successively in an on-line process.
12. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the primer coating is dried at a temperature of 10 - 60°C in a forced air flow.
13. (Amended) A method of using an aqueous solution of an inorganic salt of concentration at least 0.01M as a spray treatment of steel primer coated with a primer coating comprising an aqueous silica sol or alkali metal